



State Capitol | Lansing, Michigan 48913
PH (517) 373.1758 | FAX (517) 373.0938
www.senate.michigan.gov/gop/senator/cassis/

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CONTACT: Alec Lloyd
(517) 373-1619

Cassis announces bills to restore park funding

Measures correct tax shift that hurt metroparks

State Sen. Nancy Cassis today unveiled legislation to restore funding to Michigan metroparks and other eligible authorities, which would address the consequences of the 2004 acceleration of county property tax payments that led to the loss of funding for parks such as the Huron-Clinton Metropark Authority (HCMA). Because of the tax shift, HCMA has lost \$530,000 from its annual budget, which could adversely affect Indian Springs, Stony Creek and Kensington metroparks among other state metroparks.

The first bill requires the state to restore payments to the counties for metroparks and other eligible authorities, including libraries, transit and airports. The second bill calls for the counties to pass these funds on to authorities. Parks and authorities across the state have experienced \$1.2 million in lost funding.

“I said at the time that this was nothing but a shift and a shaft and now we are seeing the consequences,” said Cassis, R-Novi, chair of the Senate Finance Committee. At the time, Cassis opposed the tax shift, noting that it was effectively a tax increase for most property owners.

“Citizens view our park, library and transit authorities as positive contributions to our overall quality of life, so integral to fostering a strong economy,” Cassis said.